

Dwight's Journal of Music,

A Paper of Art and Literature.

WHOLE No. 274.

BOSTON, SATURDAY, JULY 4, 1857.

VOL. XI. No. 14.

Dwight's Journal of Music,

PUBLISHED EVERY SATURDAY.

TERMS: By Mail, \$2 per annum, in advance.
When left by Carrier, \$2.50

SINGLE COPIES, SIX CENTS.

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EDWARD L. BALCH, PRINTER.

OFFICE, No. 21 School Street, Boston.

SUBSCRIPTIONS RECEIVED

At the OFFICE OF PUBLICATION, No. 21 School St. Boston.
By RUSSELL & RICHARDSON, 291 Wash'n St. "
" CLAPP & CORY, Providence, R. I.
" C. BREUSING, 701 Broadway, New York.
" SCHARFENBERG & LUIS, 769 Broadway, "
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THE FAIR SINGER.

To make a final conquest of all me,
Love did compose so sweet an enemy,
In whom both beauties to my death agree,
Joining themselves in fatal harmony,
That while she with her eyes my heart does bind,
She with her voice might captivate my mind.

I could have fled from one but singly fair;
My disentangled soul itself might save,
Breaking the curled trammels of her hair;
But how should I avoid to be her slave,
Whose subtle art invisibly can wreath
My fetters of the very air I breathe?

It had been easy fighting on some plain,
Where victory might hang in equal choice;
But all resistance against her is vain
Who has the advantage of both eyes and voice,
And all my forces needs must be undone,
She having gained both the wind and sun.

Andrew Marcell.

The Great Handel Festival, Crystal Palace, London.

(From the Times of June 15.)

Saturday, June 13.—Full Rehearsal.

The full rehearsal for this grand and unexampled celebration, which, although entirely the work of a society of amateurs (the Sacred Harmonic Society), may be fairly regarded—as that society representing the musical taste of England in its noblest and purest expression—as the homage of a great nation to a great man, took place on Saturday morning in the Crystal Palace, before an assemblage of many thousands of persons. For the first time was tested the combined effect of the much-vaunted 2,500 singers and players, in the immense and elaborately constructed orchestra prepared for their reception, and with a space for sound to travel in which no ingenuity could devise the means of enclosing, and which had consequently rendered questionable the wisdom of the experiment when judged

from the point of view of acoustics. Hesitation, nevertheless, was partially checked from the very outset; and as the music went on, and the area gradually filled, the result became less and less uncertain, until finally all doubt was expelled, and the apprehensions preposterously entertained in certain timorous quarters with regard to the possible effects of reverberation on the roof and sides of the building, having altogether vanished, a triumphant success for the Handel Festival was unanimously and confidently predicted.

THE SCENE.

To convey any idea of the sight that unfolded itself to the spectator, in no matter what part of the edifice contiguous to the area he might be situated—whether from the orchestra and the adjacent galleries, looking down upon the multitude below, or from the base of the central transept, gazing up at the orchestra, with its army of musicians of both sexes, backed by the gigantic organ towering to the roof—whether from the organ-loft itself, or from the remotest of the galleries facing it, whence in either instance the eye might comprehend the whole prodigious and variegated picture at a glance—would demand the graphic pen of one who has described the paraphernalia of Imperial consecration with the same vivid eloquence as he has portrayed the evolutions of martial hosts, the array, the incidents, and sanguinary results of battle. We can only say that even those most familiar with the interior of the "Palace made of windows," and under circumstances of the greatest festivity, can form no notion of it, but must await the experience of to-day to acknowledge that they never beheld the like before. To argue from the incessant circulation which took place during the rehearsal, there was as much anxiety to obtain a series of views as even to judge of the effect of the music. The winding staircases that connect the galleries with each other appeared to distant beholders as though endowed with locomotive power—as if, indeed, they themselves were making, with strange evolutions, the passage from platform to platform, of which they were merely the unconscious instruments under the pressure of living feet. The opportunity of perpetuating so imposing a spectacle was not lost, since, while Mr. Costa was directing the rehearsal of one of the choruses, Messrs. Negretti and Zambra, photographers to the Crystal Palace Company, procured, in almost an instant of time, for the stereoscope, a very striking daguerreotype view of the whole orchestra and a great part of the audience, which was subsequently forwarded to Her Majesty the Queen.

THE STAGE.

The orchestra, its aspect, and the method of its construction, have already been described in general terms; but a few brief technical *memoranda* will not be out of place. This really ingenious and novel work of architectural carpentry was not erected by contract (like its costly predecessor at the inauguration of the Sydenham Palace in 1854), but planned and completed by Mr. W. Earee, the company's resident clerk of the works, assisted by the permanent staff of workmen. It occupies a space of 14,784 superficial feet, 168 feet wide, and absorbs 10,102 cubical feet of timber. The weight of the entire structure is about 160 tons. The banks of seats

for the chorus are 23 in number, which, with 9 for the instrumental performers, makes a total of 32. The highest range is 52 feet from the floor of the orchestra, where Mr. Costa, the conductor, and the principal vocalists are stationed. The average curved extent of each range of seats is 160 feet. This huge mass of timber is supported by "uprights," with a scantling of 5 inches by 5, and diagonal braces 4 inches by 1½. The whole framework is distributed in squares of 8 feet, "centre and centre."

THE ORGAN.

The organ, erected for the occasion by Messrs. Gray and Davison, (who also built the instrument for the last Handel commemoration, which took place in 1834, at Westminster Abbey,) covers an area of 42 by 26 feet, and is supported by a platform of enormous strength and solidity. Some description of this magnificent instrument—of which Saturday's experience, under the hands and feet of Mr. Brownsmith, organist to the Sacred Harmonic Society, more than confirmed the favorable anticipations—has already been given in *The Times*, accompanied by a catalogue of its stops, &c. Any attempt at a technical analysis of its mechanical construction, or even at an abstract appreciation of its merits, would be out of place in the columns of a newspaper not exclusively devoted to such matters; but we may afford space for a short extract from a pamphlet evidently written by an accomplished connoisseur, and which enters at great length into the peculiar claims of the new instrument to be regarded as one of the most admirable works of English manufacture:—

The aim of the builders has been to produce an instrument, the varied qualities of which should combine all desirable musical beauty with force and grandeur of tone sufficient to qualify it for the part it is specially destined to bear in this great commemoration; and, should the result be pronounced successful, it is presumed that the very unusual difficulties to which the instrument is subjected will be felt to proportionately enhance the credit due to its constructors. On an occasion when all the preparations are on so vast a scale it will be naturally concluded that the festival organ must be, even in the obvious and external sense, a very large instrument. In this particular it is highly probable that the spectator will at a first glance be disappointed. The prodigious dimensions of the transept of the Crystal Palace, dwarfing to all but insignificance every single object it encloses, operates of course, in greatly diminishing the apparent magnitude of the organ. The reader has been elsewhere informed that the orchestra prepared for this occasion 'alone covers considerably more space than is found in any music hall in the kingdom;' and similarly he may be assisted to estimate the space occupied by the organ if told that it stands on more ground than that allotted to most ordinary houses. Its width is 40 feet by a depth of 30. He will, perhaps, be at a loss to conceive how by any possibility a musical instrument can require all these 1,200 superficial feet of standing room, and be tempted to set it down as a piece of display—an attempt to impose on him by the mere appearance of magnitude. A few simple facts will, however, convince him that these arrangements are controlled by a necessity passing all show. When he is told that this organ contains 4,510 sounding pipes, varying in size from 32 feet in length, with a diameter sufficient to easily admit the passage of a stout man's body, to less than 1 inch in length, with the bore of an ordinary quill; that, in order to place these 4,510 pipes efficiently at the performer's disposal, at least 6,800 other separate working parts are required (many of these being complete machines in themselves, and separate members of which, if reckoned as in the process of manufacture, would at least quintuple the number;) that all these 11,310 sounding and working

parts require such a disposition and arrangement that each one may be more or less easily accessible for those occasions of adjustment which must frequently arise in so complicated an instrument; and, finally, that the entire mass before him weighs nearly 50 tons, he will scarcely fail to perceive that the space is economically rather than ostentatiously occupied, and will, moreover, be enabled perhaps to understand some of those points often deemed mysterious with regard to large organs in general—such, for example, as their cost and the time occupied in their manufacture.

Internally the Crystal Palace organ is beyond doubt a very large instrument. Although the number of its pipes is for many reasons a very fallacious test, when applied to the power and capability of such an instrument, it may be well to state that in this respect it considerably exceeds the world-famous organ at Haarlem—the total number of pipes in the latter being 4,088, while, were the two placed side by side in the Crystal Palace orchestra, the difference in point of power would be still more remarkable. The performer has at his disposal four complete rows of keys, each having a compass of 58 notes, and each commanding a distinct department of the instrument. He has also a set of 'pedals'—a key-board played by his feet, in fact—by means of which he calls forth the ponderous basses necessary to support the general harmony.

GETTING SEATED AND BEGINNING.

But to return to the rehearsal. The mere preliminary of getting 2,500 vocal and instrumental performers in their places without confusion would, it was very naturally imagined, involve a labor of no ordinary difficulty; but so efficient were the precautions adopted, and so easy the means of ingress and egress, that the feat was accomplished without a single misunderstanding. At 11 o'clock, the hour appointed for beginning, every singer and every player was stationed in the spot assigned, while every instrument and every music book was at the immediate disposal of the owners. This shows how much, with how little pains and in how short a time, can be effected by simple regulations and strict discipline. The regulations were due to the committee of the Sacred Harmonic Society, under the superintendence of their untiring agent, Mr. Robert Bowley; the discipline proceeded from the moral control of Mr. Costa, to the exercise of which he owes no little of the influence both social and professional that has invariably attached to his position. The generalissimo, whose duty was to marshal and review the harmonious host assembled at the mighty name of Handel, was (as usual) to the minute at his post. The cheers and acclamations that greeted him, not only from the crowds that peopled the area and galleries, but from his own forces, anxiously awaiting the first gyrations of his familiar wand, testified to the popular deference he has won through his own perseverance, and the conviction that he was born to sway, and not to serve. For a moment Handel himself, the Crystal Palace, and all that it contained were forgotten in Mr. Costa; but when—after the overture to the *Messiah* had been performed (in which the amazing force of stringed instruments almost bewildered the hearer favorably enough situated to catch the entire volume of sound)—the first strains of that majestic chorus, "And the glory of the Lord," were led off by the altos, answered by the trebles, and the whole measure of harmony filled simultaneously up by tenors and basses, Handel resumed his sceptre, and from that instant remained undisputed monarch of the day.

REHEARSING "THE MESSIAH."

Several choruses from the first and second parts of the *Messiah* were gone through, and, among others, "For unto us a child is born," "He is the King of Glory," and "The Lord gave the word, great was the company of the preachers,"—all of which (and they are very different in character) produced a marked sensation. But from the sublime "Hallelujah" most was expected, and the greatest results were obtained. The weight and sonority of the numberless bass voices, in unison, on the passage, "He shall reign for ever and ever," which forms one of the counter-themes of this transcendent hymn, were marvellous; and when—at the end of the progression (so wondrous from its combined simplicity and grandeur,) in which the trebles held out a succession of long-sustained notes, from D up to G—the entire force of voices and instru-

ments united in giving emphasis to the chord which leads to the resumption of the original key, the effect was nothing short of stupendous. It is worthy of remark that, "great as was the company of" singers and players, their efficiency was not only preserved in passages where they are employed on plain harmony, but just as much where the working of two themes in conjunction renders the acquisition of clearness and precision a task of much more difficulty. There was not the slightest evidence of hesitation from beginning to end. We have one observation to make, however, in a more critical spirit. It may be absolutely necessary, under the conditions of such a performance in such a place, and with such a host, to take the "Hallelujah" and other choruses slower than the composer meant, but it is assuredly not necessary, to depart from his intentions without some beneficial result to sanction the liberty. Now, no such result, but the contrary, is derived from the *pianissimo*, upon which Mr. Costa insists, at the commencement of the chorus "For unto us a child is born," and as far on as to the passage on the words "wonderful—counsellor—the mighty God—the everlasting Father—the Prince of Peace." There is no warrant for such a reading. The proclamation of the birth of a Saviour is not made in a whisper, as if it were a secret perilous to disclose, but in accents of exultation, conveying the joy and gratitude of the nations at their delivery. An abstract musical effect may, perhaps, be attained by the sudden burst upon the word "wonderful," after a long continuance of underbreath singing, but it is an effect wholly independent of the words. Handel has given appropriate significance to the exclamation by putting the voices in full harmony and reinforcing them with the whole strength of the orchestra. But we protest here against this reading chiefly because it fails, under the actual circumstances, to achieve the point contemplated. Where we were placed during the performance of "For unto us a child is born," almost the whole of that part which precedes the exclamation, "Wonderful!" was lost. We could not hear the trebles give out the theme, nor the tenors answer them, nor the altos respond to the tenors, nor the basses join the altos with their florid divisions. Nor was the counter-theme, introduced by the tenors ("And the government shall be upon His shoulders"), distinctly audible; or, indeed, anything until the arrival of the *fortissimo* on the word "wonderful," which was the first indication to many not intent upon the movements of the conductor's stick that any singing or playing was going on.

"JUDAS MACCABEUS."

After the *Messiah* several choruses from *Judas Maccabæus* were rehearsed, and to such good purpose as to encourage the belief that Wednesday's performance will be as musically attractive as any. Among others must be noted as particularly successful the pathetic lamentation of Matathias—"Mourn ye afflicted children"—with whom this noble oratorio is inaugurated; "Disdainful of danger," and "We never will bow down," both masterpieces of energetic choral declamation; and, last and best, the magnificent "Fallen is the foe," at the opening of Part II., which even the composer of the *Messiah* and *Israel* has never surpassed. "See the conquering hero comes," (appropriated by Handel himself from the oratorio of *Joshua*), and the march that follows it, so picturesque and full of character, were also among the pieces tried, and were listened to with eager attention by the audience, which at this period had swelled into a veritable multitude—greatly in favor, by the way, of the musical effect. The rehearsal of *Judas* was rendered additionally agreeable by the appearance of two of the principal solo-singers, Madame Clara Novello and Mr. Sims Reeves—the former of whom sang the recitative and air, "Oh Liberty," and the latter the fiery war song of Judas—"Sound an alarm." These highly esteemed artists were received with due honors. The reception accorded to Mr. Sims Reeves, however, both by the orchestra and the audience, was overwhelming; and this, no doubt, urged him to unwonted enthusiasm, since on no previous occasion

have we heard him sing, either "Sound an alarm" or anything else, with such splendid energy and dramatic power, (for the air in question is dramatic to all intents and purposes). It was surprising no less than gratifying to witness so lively an impression produced by our English tenor, after the unwonted display of choral grandeur that had gone before. Not the least interesting feature in the performance of *Judas Maccabæus* will be the extra orchestral accompaniments supplied by the experienced pen of Mr. Costa, of the merits of which—as they were doubtless written with a special view to the dimensions of the Crystal Palace—we shall not pretend to judge until we hear them in a more circumscribed arena.

"ISRAEL IN EGYPT."

After the interval of an hour—during which Mr. Staples and his numerous staff were busily employed, and apparently to the satisfaction of every one who had recourse to their aid—the vast orchestra, (which had been emptied with great expedition), was once more tenanted—the same order and precision being observed as at the commencement of the rehearsal. Several pieces, chiefly choral, from *Israel in Egypt* were now tried, including the opening chorus, "And the children of Israel sighed;" "He spake the word, and there came all manner of flies;" "He gave them hailstones;" "He sent a thick darkness;" "He smote all the firstborn of Egypt;" "He led them through the deep;" "But the waters overwhelmed them;" "The depths have covered them;" "Thy right hand, O Lord, is become, (as Handel has accented it), glorious in power;" "The people shall hear;" and the "Horse and his rider." For more reasons than one the choruses from *Israel* were the most satisfactory essays of the morning. This astonishing work—the choral masterpiece of Handel, composed the same year as *Saul*, just after his failure as manager of the Italian Opera, when he was honorably bent upon defraying the debts he had incurred, and in the incredibly brief space of 27 days!—or rather so much of it as was given on Saturday, has never before been heard to such advantage. The well-known "Hailstone" chorus literally "electrified" the audience, who, forgetting it was only a rehearsal at which they were presiding, insisted with such unanimous perseverance upon a repetition, that, in order to obtain silence, and be enabled to proceed with his duties, Mr. Costa was compelled to accord his assent, and so the piece was gone through again, to the great delight of all present. The double choruses in which *Israel in Egypt* abounds came out with extraordinary power. But—which was still more gratifying—the two pieces where false or wavering intonation had almost passed into a tradition, or at least been overlooked as inevitable, "He sent a thick darkness" and "The people shall hear," were sung by the multitude of voices perfectly in tune from end to end. Nevertheless, we must again object to the accomplished Neapolitan conductor's reading of a very important point. We allude to the termination of the choral recitative, "He sent a thick darkness," which was robbed of its awfully impressive character by slackening the time on the words "which might be felt," and especially by dwelling longer than the composer has indicated on the monosyllable "be." This imparted a theatrical character to one of the most solemn passages in the whole of *Israel*—the least theatrical and most severely uncompromising of all the oratorios of Handel. Solo singers will take such liberties, and no one can prevent them; but we should regret to see the system even tolerated, much more inculcated, in choirs that have to deal with sacred music. Another of the principal singers—Miss Dolby—came forward at this period of the rehearsal, and tried, with eminent success, the peculiar and not over-grateful air, "Their land brought forth frogs." Much disappointment was felt that the famous duet for basses, "The Lord is a man of war," was not rehearsed by Herr Formes and Mr. Weiss, who were both present, and whose fine voices every one was anxious to hear.

First Day.—Monday, June 15.

[From the Times of the 16th.]

The success of the first performance, which took place yesterday—beginning at 1 o'clock and terminating at 5—far surpassed expectation. Long previous to the commencement of the oratorio a brilliant company had assembled, and the Crystal Palace, from end to end—the nave and courts and galleries, the terraces outside, and the gardens beneath the terraces—was alive with visitors anxious in anticipation for the musical treat to come. Before the appointed hour the majority of the numbered places in the central transept were occupied, and the adjacent blocks of seats in the north and south naves were tenanted soon after. The galleries, more remote and less easy of access, had been filled earlier, so that when the principal singers entered the orchestra, and Mr. Costa (who was loudly greeted) had taken his place in front of the conductor's desk, there were not many vacant spots to dwell upon. Not that the crowd was inconvenient. On the contrary, the fact that Her Majesty the Queen had intimated her intention of presiding at the performance of *Judas Maccabæus* on Wednesday no doubt kept all those away who would be likely to attend such a celebration in obedience to fashion and an appetite for show, rather than for love of music and reverence for the name and memory of the greatest of sacred composers. There were thousands enough present, however, to realize anything that had been predicted of the splendor of the scene. The weather was superb, the sky unclouded as in the sunniest Italian landscape, and the interior of the Palace looked nothing short of enchanting. A prospect was revealed, indeed, which dazzled the eye of the beholder, and suggested the idea of some gigantic kaleidoscope, peopled with multitudinous objects in every variety of form and color. It is unnecessary to attempt a new description of a scene so closely resembling that we endeavored to portray in the notice of Saturday's rehearsal—and the more so since whatever remains to be said will derive additional weight and interest when embodied in the report of tomorrow's proceedings, which, as we have stated, are to be graced with the presence of Royalty. Moreover, the first day of the Handel Festival belongs of right to Handel, whose immortal *Messiah* was given in such a manner and with such a prodigality of resources as may justly be styled unprecedented.

An immense crowd of people were collected outside the building, and remained there throughout the entire performances. They were certainly not unrewarded, for during the choruses the peal of voices seemed to swell from the building and fill the air as though the Palace itself was a vast organ. The Hallelujah chorus could be distinctly heard nearly half a mile from Norwood, and its effect, as the sound floated on the wind, now high now low, was impressive beyond description, and sounded as if a nation was at prayers.

The change determined on at the rehearsal in the position of the chorists, by means of which the female singers were all brought together in front of the organ and were conspicuous from every point, not only afforded an agreeable relief to the eye, but added materially to the effect of the music. The different choral parts being now well balanced, the thunder of the men's voices no longer overpowered the more mellifluous tones of their fair companions and fellow-laborers. Another desirable improvement was achieved by the establishment of screens at the back and sides of the orchestra, through which contrivance the sound, instead of escaping into the empty galleries and corridors in the immediate neighborhood of that enormous amphitheatre of timber, was thrown directly upon the area devoted to the audience. Among other objects in the orchestra that attracted general interest were a portrait, a bust, and a full-length statue (in marble) of the great musician in whose honor this festival was instituted. The portrait, hung in front of the organ, was the one painted from life by Denner, which Handel bequeathed to his

amanuensis, John Christopher Smith, whose lineal descendant, Lady Rivers, recently made a gift of it to the Sacred Harmonic Society. It is said, on good authority, to be one of the best likenesses extant. The statue on the right, for which Handel sat, (also in possession of the Sacred Harmonic Society), is by Roubillac. Horace Walpole, in one of his letters, affirms that this statue laid the foundation of Roubillac's fame in England. It was his first great work; and it is worth noting that his last was Handel's monument in Westminster Abbey. A cast of it has been forwarded by the Sacred Harmonic Society to Berlin, for the statue to be erected at Halle (the birthplace of the composer) at the centenary commemoration in 1859, upon which a Berlinese sculptor, favored by His Prussian Majesty, is busily engaged. The bust, on the left, is cast from one belonging to the musical collection in the Royal Library at Berlin. The name of the artist is unknown.

PERFORMANCE OF "THE MESSIAH."

The performance, as we have suggested, was wonderfully successful. The greatest effects, it may readily be imagined, the extent and peculiarities of the arena being taken into consideration, were produced by the choruses, of which the *Messiah* affords so astonishing a variety. All of these "went" more or less well, while some surpassed in grandeur of tone, precision, and unanimity, anything we can call to mind. The most irreproachable were naturally those in which the occurrence of florid passages is least frequent, and broad and massive harmony is the prominent characteristic. The very first chorus, "And the glory of the Lord," at once disclosed the signal advantage gained by the new disposition of the female voices. The trebles more particularly, which at times were scarcely audible during rehearsal, now came out with penetrating clearness. "And He shall purify the sons of Levi" is one of those choral pieces abounding in florid divisions, and here there was a good deal of occasional unsteadiness, especially (strange enough, their depth and solidity of tone considered,) among the basses, which, swinging to and fro, were only prevented from going astray by the marvellous decision of Mr. Costa's beat. "For unto us a child is born" was perfect. Mr. Costa (calculating, no doubt, from the experience of Saturday's rehearsal) discarded the "pianissimo" at the commencement; and thus the advent of the *Messiah* was declared in accents of becoming exultation. The grand burst—"Wonderful! Counselor!"—lost nothing by this, but rather gained, since a moment's reflection must convince any one of the absurdity of uttering the preceding words—"His name shall be called"—in a tone scarcely audible, while the close of the announcement—"Wonderful! Counselor!"—the name itself—is shouted with the utmost possible loudness. The audience, moved to enthusiasm by so fine a performance, redemanded it obstreperously; and their applause continued until the pastoral symphony had been played half way through; but the conductor was inexorable, and resolutely declined to interrupt the course of the oratorio, for which he is entitled to the thanks of all discreet persons. After "His yoke is easy," the orchestra dispersed, the majority of the audience imitated their example, and eating and drinking were the order of the day.

Nearly all the superb choruses in Part II—the Passion, the contemplation by man of the heavenly power, the persecution of the Gospel teachers, and the triumph—were admirably given, the only evidence of indecision being observed in "All we like sheep," last but one of that magnificent chain of choral movements, inaugurated with such heart-rending pathos in "Surely he hath borne our griefs." Here again we had most frequently to complain of the basses, who were also now and then unsteady during the majestic fugue, "He trusted in God," in other respects faultless. The "Hallelujah" (during which, according to traditional custom, the whole assembly remained standing) was grand beyond description. To be brief, no less can be said of the astounding chorus, "Worthy is the Lamb," with which the oratorio

terminates. The "Amen" was equal in all respects to the "Hallelujah," and constituted a fitting climax to one of the most impressive and exciting performances ever heard of the *Messiah*. The instrumental orchestra distinguished itself honorably throughout. The fugue in the overture and the fugal symphonies in the final chorus brought out the strength and quality of the violins with surprising effect; and the accompaniments were played with a delicacy and precision worthy of all praise.

By the side of the chorus the solo singers, in such a place and under such circumstances, could hardly be expected to shine to much advantage. The florid airs were, of course, the least distinctly audible, and consequently the least effective. Thus Madame Clara Novello produced a far better impression in "Come unto Him," and "I know that my Redeemer liveth," than in "Rejoice greatly;" Mr. Sims Reeves obtained his greatest successes in "Comfort ye my people" and "Thou shalt break them;" Miss Dolby pleased most in "He was despised," and Herr Formes in "The people that walked in darkness." Two of the bass songs, however, "Why do the nations" (Mr. Weiss), and "The trumpet shall sound" (Herr Formes), made, we are at a loss to explain why, exceptions to the rule. In the last the trumpet-playing of Mr. T. Harper called for unqualified eulogy. At the same time, it must be added, all these accomplished artists sang their very best, and used every effort to do honor to the great commemoration in aid of which their services had been called into requisition, often triumphantly vanquishing the obstacles presented by the unaccustomed dimensions of the arena in which they were exhibiting, and extorting the warmest applause from the audience. What, however, after such choruses as "Hallelujah," and some dozen others, delivered from the united throats of 2,000 singers, can reasonably be expected from one solitary voice—soprano, tenor, contralto, or bass?

We should have mentioned that the oratorio was preceded by the National Anthem, the principal solos being sung by Madame Novello.

The audience dispersed with as much order as they had assembled.

Second Day.—Wednesday, 17th.

The second of these great commemorative festivals was given to-day, in the presence of her Majesty, with a grandeur and success which left nothing to be wished for either on the part of its promoters or the public. There was no hitch either by rail or road, no apologies or excuses at the eleventh hour; even the weather was favorable, and the arrangements both within and without the building were perfect and thoroughly carried into effect. From first to last there occurred nothing which could detract from the *clat* of the day, or lessen its claims to be considered as one which must ever form a conspicuous era in our musical annals.

Her Majesty and the Royal party arrived at the private entrance a few minutes before 1 o'clock. After a delay of a few minutes, the Queen, accompanied by the Grand Duke Maximilian, and followed by his Royal Highness Prince Albert, his Royal Highness the Prince of Prussia, the Princess Royal, the Prince of Wales, the Princess Alice, and suite, proceeded to the Royal balcony, which had been handsomely fitted up in the north corner of the transept immediately facing the orchestra. As the Queen approached, a buzz of expectation ran through the vast assemblage, which rose by a simultaneous movement, clapping hands, and waving hats and handkerchiefs with such enthusiasm, that even the Queen, though well used to cordial receptions from her subjects, seemed completely moved, and curtsied repeatedly in acknowledgment of the welcome. Ere this burst of loyalty had quite subsided, the grand strains of the National Anthem pealed through the building in massive sounding notes which made the very floors and pillars vibrate as though rustling with a heavy wind. When its solemn cadence had completely died away there was another outbreak of applause, not so much of course for the National Anthem (though magnificently given) as for the august lady in whose honor it was sung.

As the audience settled themselves into their places, Messrs. Negretti and Zambra, the photographers of the Crystal Palace, took a beautiful photograph of the whole scene, making the Royal box its centre. It was a perfect likeness, and so well and quickly done that copies of it were printed, framed, glazed, and laid before the Royal party before the first portion of the oratorio had concluded. The spot from which it was taken was the gallery over the organ, whence perhaps the finest *coup d'œil* which the festivals of this country have ever shown was presented. Immediately beneath

was the great organ, like a cathedral of music, with every tower and pinnacle of its vocal frame sending forth a volume of sound amid which even 2000 human voices were almost lost. Round this, in a vast amphitheatre came the chorus—Costa lowest of all, with pale and earnest face, singing in conscientious love every note of the music he regulated; while below the orchestra, again, was ranged the brilliant mass of visitors, rank on rank, like the divisions of an army of old, all richness, pomp, and color. These features alone would have made it a prospect on which the memory would dwell, but when to it are added the tiers of close-filled galleries, rising high and spreading wide—the noise of the chorus as “with the hiss like rustling winds” they rose to volume forth, “Sing unto God,” the Royal visitors all beating time, and watching every note, and the solemn anxiety of attention which seemed to reign over all—it was grand and impressive beyond all powers of description.

“JUDAS MACCABEUS.”

The execution of *Judas Maccabæus*, to the surprise of amateurs, was on the whole even better than that of the *Messiah*. The music being less familiar to the generality, perhaps caused the singers and players to be more on their guard, and more anxiously careful in taking up the points; but, whatever the reason, the result was as we have stated. A vast improvement was also noted in the effect produced by the solo voices, and this may be traced to the fact that there was a much larger crowd in the area and south nave—the galleries, affording a less favorable view of the Royal box and its distinguished tenants, having been partially deserted for the seats below. Madame Novello's clear and penetrating voice was heard to much better advantage in the National Anthem; and her high “B flat,” which was the town-talk after the inauguration of the Crystal Palace three years since, again excited admiration.

The oratorio of *Judas Maccabæus*, although it must not be compared with the *Messiah* and *Israel in Egypt*, is still one of the greatest compositions of Handel. The twelfth of the nineteen works of the same class written by the illustrious musician in this country, it was planned and completed in the short space of one month, (when Handel was in his 61st year,) and performed at Covent Garden Theatre on the 1st of April, 1747, with great success. One of its principal charms is the variety which the nature of the book suggested to the composer. This enabled Handel to break repeatedly from the bonds in which he was held by the insipid muse of Dr. Thomas Morrell, and soaring on the wings of genius, to make the world forget the dullness of the poet in the greatness of the musician. The three parts into which the oratorio is divided are happily contrasted—the prevalence of pathetic music in the first, of heroic in the second, and of jubilant in the third, stamping each with a certain characteristic individuality of which the composer successfully availed himself.

In the overture, one of Handel's most spirited orchestral preludes, the fugue was led off and responded to by the violins and other stringed instruments with wonderful precision. The opening chorus (lamentation for the father of Judas), so sublime in its expression of grief, was remarkably well given, and the subdued under-tone of the voices on the words, “is no more,” in beautiful relief. Equally good was its companion in musical pathos, “For Zion lamentation make,” which, besides its very striking progression of harmony, contains a phrase bearing a close resemblance to “Behold the Lamb of God,” in the *Messiah*. The choral supplication, “O, Father, whose Almighty power,” was highly impressive, and the basses seemed determined to expiate their rare shortcomings on the occasion of the first performance. The fugue, to which the words, “And grant a leader bold and brave,” is set, was everywhere pointed and accurate. In this chorus, and in several others, Mr. Costa has introduced brass instruments, often with great felicity and effect, but at times, we think, too lavishly.

The other choruses in the first part were sung in very satisfactory style,—“We come, we come” (in the same key as “He gave them hailstones,” from *Israel*, and in some points bearing a strong similarity to that wonderful piece); “Lead on, lead on,” and “Disdainful of danger”—short, bold, and vigorous illustrations of the same sentiment, and appearing in bold relief after the solemn character of what precedes them—were all effective. But still better was the final chorus, “Hear us, O Lord,” which embodies simultaneously, and with infinite grandeur, the sentiment of religious faith and the enthusiasm of martial ardor. Mendelssohn evidently had this very fine composition in his mind when he wrote the noble and ingenious chorus in *St. Paul*, “Oh, great are the depths.” The first part of the oratorio could not have terminated with more splendid effect.

After the usual interval, which her Majesty the Queen and her faithful subjects devoted, we believe, to much the same object—that of refreshment, the second part of *Judas Maccabæus* commenced majestically with one of the most superb and dramatic of all the choruses of Handel—“Fallen is the foe.” In this grand inspiration the author of the *Messiah* has displayed the singular faculty he possessed of seizing hold and developing any marked idea that might be presented to him through the medium of no matter what kind of poetry. Dr. Morell (happily) has refrained from treating the subject at any length.

His allusions to the victory of Judas, and the destruction of the enemy, are comprised in a not very transcendent couplet:—

“Fall'n is the foe; so fall thy foes, O Lord,
“Where warlike Judas wields his righteous sword.”

That is all. But it was enough for Handel, and helped him to contrive a masterpiece—a musical poem of astonishing and varied power. The only objection we have to make to Mr. Costa's additions here is that he has filled up the intervals in that remarkable passage where the voices reiterate the word “Fall'n,” three times, in an underbreath, the mysterious effects of which cannot but be injured by any interpolation. In this, and in the tuneful and beautifully harmonized choral piece which chimes in with the duet, “Sion now her head shall raise,” the multitude of singers earned nothing but laurels. The high note (A) of the trebles and altos, sustained during two bars, on the word “harp,” was nothing short of thrilling. The pathetic chorus, “Ah, wretched Israel!” (where the Jews are in despair at the approach of Antiochus) would have been irreproachable, but for the substitution of loud for soft in the concluding passage, which violated Handel's meaning without improving him.

The finest choral performance of the day, however, and one of the finest probably ever listened to, was that of the glorious and magnificent “We never, never will bow down,” (in which, by the way, Mr. Costa has employed the brass instruments with powerful and legitimate effect.) The sublime progression of harmony in the major key—on the words, “We worship God and God alone”—the bass of which is afterwards treated, with extraordinary ingenuity, as a plain song (“*canto fermo*”) combined with an independent fugue—was delivered with astounding force; and from that point to the climax the choir seemed to accumulate power. The audience, to use a familiar phrase, were completely “carried away” by this wonderful performance, the most perfect and the most impressive that, up to this moment, has distinguished the Handel Festival. The applause was tumultuous.

In the third part the most striking point was the well-known “See the Conquering Hero comes,” which was capitally performed, and re-demanded with even greater vehemence than “For unto us a Child is born,” on Monday. Mr. Costa, however—consistent to the wise principle he would seem to have adopted—proceeded with the march, heedless of the uproar behind him. The audience continuing obstinate, however, and evidently indisposed to submit even to a wholesome despotism, the conductor turned to gallery in which the Queen was seated, as if for counsel how to act. The matter was briefly settled; her Majesty, appearing to entertain the same wish as that which had been unanimously expressed by her subjects, conveyed a signal of assent, and the favorite chorus was repeated. The “Hallelujah,” which brings the oratorio to an end—Handel's least important composition of its class—was given in a style worthy of the rest, and appropriately terminated this remarkably fine performance.

The principal singers, as we have hinted, were far more successful than on Monday, and for the reason already suggested. The chief honors of the day were awarded—and justly awarded—to Mr. Sims Reeves, who delivered the three trying airs, “Call forth thy powers,” “How vain is man,” and “Sound an alarm,” in a manner we have never heard surpassed by any singer. As an example of florid execution, “How vain is man” was absolutely faultless, while the two great war songs were masterpieces of vocal declamation. The impression made upon the crowd was commensurate with the perfection of the singing, and at the conclusion of each piece Mr. Reeves was honored by a burst of applause as unanimous as it was enthusiastic. Miss Dolby was next entitled to commendation. Nothing could be more purely devotional than her “Pious orgies,” nothing more correct and artistic than her “Father of Heaven,” while in whatever concerted music she took part she equally excelled. The sopranos, Mme. Novello and Mme. Rudersdorf, both had their triumphs—the former in the air, “From mighty kings,” from which she discreetly omitted all the antiquated shakes; the latter in “Wise men flattering,” which obtained immense applause. Mr. Montem Smith acquitted himself ably as second tenor; and the bass music was divided between Herr Fornes and Mr. Weiss—the recitative and air, “Arm, arm, ye brave,” being the distinguishing effort of the German, while “The Lord worketh wonders” gained much credit for the English singer. This improvement in the vocal solos (or rather, perhaps, in the effect they produced) was not the least gratifying incident of the day.

After “Judas Maccabæus,” at the Queen's desire, if we are rightly informed, the Old Hundredth Psalm was sung, her Majesty and the whole assembly standing. The third verse, “Oh, enter then His gates with praise,” was given in unison by the united voices of the 2,000 choristers. A more grand and impressive effect cannot be imagined. Haydn and M. Berlioz, the musical antipodes of each other, would have gone into extasies about this performance, just as they did about the charity children in St. Paul's Cathedral.

[From the New York Musical Review.]

The Musical Festival at Philadelphia.

Five days of rest and recreation, of happiness and peace, taken from the daily routine of hurry

and business; five days of song, of music, and of joyful sensation; not the gathering of a few idlers, which the crowd pass by without notice, or with mingled feelings of contempt and pity, but of thousands of foreign and native citizens, whose performances are sanctioned and complimented by the press, and participated in by the public officers of the city. Such was the German Festival of Music at Philadelphia.

It is evident that these German Festivals are hereafter to occupy a prominent place in American society; and it is this immediate contact with the masses that can alone plant and develop the germ of the beautiful and grand in the minds of high and low, and place the Festival above all other musical events in this country. Nor should we attribute the importance of these festivals, and their influence upon society, alone to the fact that the musical performances are on a larger scale than usual. For what is the use of performing the master-works of musical art with a large body of talented artists, even for several days consecutively, if done only for the few? It is for this reason that, in England, where the prices of admittance to musical festivals is exorbitant, their imagined refining influence upon society has become a dead letter. So long as the national and social character is not preserved in them, they become simply concerts for those who, by their position and intellectual ability, need them least.

But if, on the one hand, this view forms in our opinion a most essential part of these festivals, on the other, we must not lose sight of the musical character. The music should be such as to suit the masses who live in the present, and not in a past age; it ought to be grand and edifying, but, at the same time, in spirit, character, and treatment, popular; the performances ought to be dignified and painstaking; in short, as good as possible. We are sorry to say that, in this respect, the late Festival in Philadelphia did not meet our expectations, while in all others it was a decided success.

SATURDAY AFTERNOON.

The Festival commenced on the thirteenth of June, the very day when the comet was expected to make his appearance. Although he was especially invited by the singers, in a very amusing poem, published in their *Album*, of all the invited guests he alone failed to appear. The enemies of the Festival said it was because he thought himself sufficiently represented by the singing, while the members said that he was reminded in time of the old saying of the German poet, which was inscribed upon the walls:

“Where they sing, there rest in peace,
For bad people have no songs.”

Nearly the whole day was consumed in preparing for the reception of the singers. These were from Alexandria, Baltimore, Boston, Brooklyn, Easton, Harrisburg, Hartford, Hoboken, Newark, New York, New Haven, Reading, Richmond, Trenton, Washington, Williamsburg, Wilmington, and Philadelphia; in all, 54 societies, numbering 1505 members.

The singers and guests were received with a cannon-salute from the wharf, and escorted with a band of music to Independence Square, where the Philadelphia singers welcomed them with a song composed especially for the occasion, the opening words of which, “Friends, brethren, be welcome to our circle,” made a very deep and hearty impression. After this, a long torch-light procession was formed, with banners and military bands at the head of each society, which proceeded to Jayne's Hall, from the balcony of which rockets and mighty cheers were sent forth, as soon as the singers came in sight. The crowd through which the procession passed was immense; however, no disturbance of its ranks took place.

Jayne's Hall was fitted up very appropriately. Outside, in front, was a splendid transparency, representing Apollo crowning with laurels the Goddesses of Music, Art and Science; but what pleased us more was, the decoration of the interior—not so much on account of the tables extending the whole length of the hall, and bountifully covered with a collation for the entertain-

ment of the visitors, but on account of the inscriptions on the walls, representing, in chronological order, the names of the most eminent musicians since the year A. D. 333, thus giving an epitome of the whole history of music. The idea upon which this ornamental decoration was founded was certainly very good, although the design might have been improved by giving not only the names, but also, in large letters, the spirit and character of the different epochs. Other inscriptions from German and English authors were conspicuous, all having special reference to the nature, necessity, and triumphs of music.

Some of these were very appropriate. For instance, Luther's

"He who loves not woman, play, and song,
Will be a fool his whole life long."

And Schiller's

ART.

"To one, she is the heavenly goddess; to the other, a good cow, which has to provide them with butter."

Or the following, for the ideas of which the German Seume was indebted to Shakspeare:

"The man that hath no music in his soul,
Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds,
Is fit for treason, stratagems, and spoils;
Let no such man be trusted."

As soon as all the singers were seated in the hall, the President of the Festival welcomed them; the banners were arranged around the boxes in the rear, from which all their peculiar beauties could be seen; and the supper commenced with that activity, that good humor, and that especial talent for causing its contents to disappear, which, on such occasions, seems to be given to every nation. A peculiar item in this supper was the entire absence of the usual "bier," which was displaced by the more national Rhenish wine from Fatherland. Thus ended the first day, amidst eating, drinking, and singing, and with the utmost confidence in the stability of the world, and the necessity of musical festivals.

SUNDAY.

To the Quaker city, this Sunday presented, doubtless, a strange and unusual aspect. Early in the morning, Chestnut street was thronged with jolly-looking people, (with every variety of ribbons fluttering from their coats), and filled with the sounds of music, wafted by the breeze from Jayne's Hall, where the rehearsal for the concert in the evening took place. The refreshment-rooms, (opened for the first time on the Sabbath), were besieged by an ever-thirsty army of singers. Even the druggists were compelled to open their soda-fountains, which, once opened, knew no closing. Immediately after the rehearsal, the Philadelphians, as the first item on the programme of the day, escorted their guests to the different places of interest in the surrounding country. Very likely, in these different trips, the national beverage was duly patronized; but no evidence of it existed when, upon their return in the evening, the concert commenced.

The hall, on this occasion, was well filled; and although the majority were Germans, a goodly number of Americans were present.

PROGRAMME.

1. Overture, Fingalshoele. (Mendelssohn.)—2. The Iron Viper. Oratorio. (Loewe.)—3. Festival Overture. (V. Lachner.)—4. Credo from the Twelfth Mass. (Mozart.)—5. Solo, Angels ever bright and fair. (Handel.) Miss Caroline Richings.—6. Chorus from the Creation. (Haydn.)—7. Duet from the Creation. (Haydn.) Miss C. Richings, and Mr. Ph. Rohr.—8. Hallelujah, from the Messiah. (Handel.)

These pieces were all performed by the Philadelphia societies alone, to whom were added about eighty ladies, and a strong orchestra, the whole under the direction of Mr. Wolsieffer. This latter gentleman is one of the oldest musicians, and the founder of the German singing-societies in Philadelphia. It was probably on account of this circumstance, and the lamentable fact that the Quaker city possesses no better conductor of its own, which led to his appointment—an illustration of that smallness of mind which seems to rule so many public affairs, whether musical or not, in this and other countries. If they had no good conductor in Philadelphia, they were

bound to engage the best they could find elsewhere; and certainly they needed not to go far to have found a superior one, as Mr. Bergmann was at that time in Philadelphia, conducting the German Opera. The fact of an accomplished leader not being in Philadelphia should never have interfered with the management of a national festival like this. We doubt not Mr. Wolsieffer is a very good musician, but he was a very poor conductor. He lacked conception, energy, and thorough influence upon his singers as well as his orchestra. But what was worse than this, was the programme itself. To have only two orchestral compositions performed, and one of them worn out, and the other scarcely worthy to be worn at all, and then to bring forward an oratorio like *The Iron Viper*, (which of itself illustrates the fact, that even a clever and intelligent author must become tiresome if his artistic actions are entirely ruled by a very old idea), then to sing fragments by Handel, Haydn, and Mozart, which have been heard over and over again—all this is certainly very discouraging, and could never have taken place with an intelligent body of men, if party interests had not interfered. We suppose a principal cause of this arrangement in the programme was the desire to have short pieces, and, at the same time, such as would come under the head of sacred music. If it were necessary to select such music on account of the Sabbath, it would have been much better to go to the old Italian masters, whose compositions are less known, and—in point of the strictly religious view, and musical treatment—certainly more sacred than most of the modern so-called church compositions. But, after all, are not the ninth symphony, Berlioz's *Harold*, Schumann's *Paradise and Peri*, or the *Pilgrimage of the Rose*, Mendelssohn's *Lobgesang*, and a host of other orchestral and vocal compositions, as strictly sacred as any of Mozart's, Handel's, or Haydn's church compositions?

As to the performance of all the numbers of the above programme, the solo pieces gave evidently the most satisfaction and, in some respects, this was quite right. Miss Richings sung her aria (in English) exceedingly well, but spoiled the impression by a very inappropriate alteration at its conclusion. The young lady has a good voice, and what we should call a showy method—which is often not a very reliable one.

MONDAY.

This was a busy day for the singers. There was first a rehearsal at the Academy of Music, and then the long-expected and (by many of the participators) the much-dreaded procession of the singers, with the military escort of honor, to Independence Square, where the Mayor of Philadelphia, Mr. Vaux, welcomed them with a hearty and well-pointed speech. The streets through which the procession marched were crowded, and Independence Square offered a most brilliant display of the thronging multitudes. The Mayor, in his address, alluded to the importance and social influence of these festivals—which, coming from the chief magistrate of the city, was regarded as a very high compliment to the Germans there assembled, and responded to by three hearty cheers. After his address, the singers retired to their headquarters, marching amidst thousands of spectators. The evening concert at the Academy of Music was well attended. We think very few of the admirers of the Italian opera—which, we hear, are more numerous in Philadelphia than any other city in the Union—could have been present, for we could detect the presence of only one opera-cloak, the best representative of fashionable opera-attendance in this country.

The programme consisted of:

1. Overture, Egmont. (Beethoven.)—2. Choral. A Tower of Strength is our God. (Luther.) Sung by all the singers.—3. Glockentöne. Bell Sounds. (Abt.) Baltimore singers.—4. Hymnus. Sixty-seventh Psalm. (J. Otto.) All the singers.—5. On the Rhine. (Kücken.) New York singers.—6. Chorus from the Prophet. Call to Arms. (Meyerbeer.) 1. Jubel Overture. (C. M. Von Weber.)—2. Double Chorus. Water and Wine Drinkers. (Zoellner.) All the singers.—3. Sacred chorus from Euryanthe. (C. M. Von Weber.) Philadelphia singers.—4. Cho-

rus. The American Champion of Liberty. (Wolsieffer.) All the singers.—5. Serenade. (Marschner.) Orpheus, Boston.—6. Pilgrim's Chorus from Tannhäuser. (R. Wagner.) All the singers.

The greatest feature in the performance of this programme was the appearance of the performers, and the stage. When the curtain rose, and the audience beheld the vast array of singers, surrounded by the words of Fatherland, one burst of agreeable surprise and satisfaction filled the room. These fifteen hundred Germans, singing in honor of social harmony and brotherhood, of peace and civilization, presented a very different sight than when the sons of Germania rose from its woods to defend their soil from the invasion of the Romans. Christianity has brought to the grandchildren of those barbarous forefathers a new mission and a new fatherland. It would be of no avail to record all the ideas which the sight of these modern Germans suggested; enough that it was a grand and a most satisfactory sight, repaying for a great many inconveniences which, in a musical sense, made themselves felt during the evening. The New York and Boston singers won the prize. They both were enthusiastically encored, and deservedly so. They showed more spirit, more expression, and also more mechanical skill than the others. Some of the pieces, however, were very little adapted to cause anything but ennui and confusion. The best performance of the united singers was Luther's Choral, which made a very good impression.

TUESDAY.

This was a general holiday for the German population, and participated in by many Americans. From early morning till late in the afternoon, almost every vehicle which could be used was put into requisition to carry the crowd to Lemon Hill, where the picnic took place. It was a grand pilgrimage, not to the Holy Land, or in honor of the Holy Church, but in honor of Nature, and the gifts to appreciate its beauties in a social manner. It was, according to all reports, the greatest turn-out Philadelphia ever witnessed. When the singers reached the spot, they found it already fully covered with all representatives of mankind, from the infant to the old man, military men and civilians, singers and lookers on, enthusiasts and cool philosophers, highly jolly fellows and very sober people—all were there, gathered in groups talking, laughing, observing, taking notes, and enjoying themselves, each in his own way. The different singing-societies were scattered over the hill, each under their different banners, occasionally singing or listening to a speech, but oftener drinking out of that musical instrument, (the only one visible), which goes under the familiar name of a horn. We have heard a great many horn-players (Vivier included) who could manage their instruments with a good deal of virtuosity, but that which we saw on this venerable afternoon exceeded anything we ever before witnessed. We met, however, one club where we saw neither banner nor horn, but where, nevertheless, the same virtuosity prevailed. It is said that this gift is peculiar to the majority of the German people. That club (from New York) also gave us some very fine specimens of quartet singing—a treat which was attempted by the other societies so often, that it lost its charm. But, if we were not always pleased, we were, under all circumstances, surprised to hear people sing in general correctly, who had already so severely tried their lungs by the use of their favorite instrument, the horn.

There was, however, one instance, where we listened for a little time with real pleasure. This was, when we came to the quarters of the old Baltimore Quartet, which gave us some very fine specimens of singing Tyrolean airs with the head-registers of the voice, which is called in German *jodeln*. Besides this, we heard many a good word, saw a deal of real fun, and listened to plenty of nonsense; but not in a single instance did we notice any laxity in speech and actions. There was high jollism, nothing more. We were quite amused at a place where a man exhibited a weighing-machine—an excellent idea, by the way, to take this occasion, where nearly all

had increased their weight by order of the day. There was, therefore, a general satisfaction expressed in these quarters with the exhibitor, especially by those who had taken not less than forty glasses of their favorite beverage. Not less amusing was the sight of some juvenile persons who, evidently not accustomed to so many hours of standing, staring, looking on, and drinking, looked immensely fatigued and worn out, but who nevertheless tried to persuade each other that they had an exceedingly nice time. Fortunately for these, and perhaps also for all concerned, it happened that, when the pic-nic had reached its climax, a thunder-storm made its appearance, which literally cleared the little shadowed hill of all the representatives of mirth and musical festivals. It is said that this was occasioned by an especial prayer of the ladies, who feared that a prolonged stay on the hill would interfere with the necessary preparations for the grand ball, which was to take place the same evening at Jayne's Hall. The Storm-king, glad to please the ladies for once, acquiesced quickly in the desire of the better half of our sex, and when the hour came for the commencement of the ball, all were on hand, presenting a brilliant sight of harmony and pleasure.

WEDNESDAY.

The morning was consecrated to some administrative affairs of the Festival, and the passage of the resolution to hold the next gathering in Baltimore. The afternoon brought all the singers together for the last time to a brilliant banquet, where the same tone, which characterized the whole affair, still prevailed, where some good and a few miserable speeches were made, and where the Festival was brought to a happy conclusion.

Before we can dismiss the subject, we wish to state that this festival has confirmed our belief in the necessity and social importance of these gatherings. At the same time, we cannot help thinking, that still better results would be obtained, if, first, the societies would introduce choruses to be sung by ladies as well as gentlemen; and, second, if parts of the programmes of these festivals were adapted for the consideration and sympathy of the Americans. If by these festivities the two nationalities shall be brought into a closer and more harmonious intercourse, (and we do not acknowledge any higher purpose for them,) then the strictly German character of the affair must be given up.

Miss Victoire Balfe.

The opinion of this young English prima donna, which we copied from the London *News*, is confirmed by the experienced critic of the *Athenæum*, as follows:

It is a bold stroke to bring out a young lady new to the stage at either of our Italian opera-houses in 'La Sonnambula,' since there exists no musical drama more familiar to the English public, or in which the principal character has been sustained by so many artists of the first class. The opera is, further, in itself, difficult for a debutante, because the great scene for the prima donna closing the drama demands that vocal steadiness and force which it is difficult to retain to the last under the anxieties of a first night.—But, whatever might be the hazard of such a challenge, the result of Thursday week justified the ambition, as proving to the public that a new and attractive artist, thoroughly prepared for her profession, is now ready for opera. So satisfactory a first appearance as Miss Balfe's we do not recollect since that of Mlle. Pauline Garcia. Miss Balfe's appearance is singularly pleasing. Her manner on the stage is easy, refined, and naturally dramatic; since no tutoring could have prepared her for the chamber scene, where her sorrow and dismay were expressed with a spontaneous abandonment, intense without exaggeration. Miss Balfe's voice is agreeable and sufficient—a mezzo-soprano, apparently, of about two octaves in compass (from A to A)—as yet expressive rather than powerful, but neither meagre in quality nor

wooden in timbre. It has been trained as few voices are trained now-a-days, and "came out" sound in intonation (a little inevitable emotion allowed for)—sure in the attack of intervals—solid in sostenuto—and brilliant in execution. The scale, ascending or descending, the arpeggio, the shake, seem entirely under Miss Balfe's command. The aria 'Come per me sereno' had been overcharged with ornaments (and, in truth, the song, with its lack-a-daisical pauses and its appoggiature, is good for little, save as a pattern-card to exhibit executive accomplishment),—in not one of which was incompleteness to be detected.—The recitatives were said with feeling; the concerted music was phrased by Miss Balfe in true musical style; the long and trying Lento, 'Ah, non credea,' in the last scene, was given with purity and pathetic expression. In the finale, we fancy that fatigue had to be surmounted, and that more may have been meant for the singer to exhibit than she executed; but the rondo was, nevertheless, so victoriously sung as to close the opera without any falling off. The welcome of Miss Balfe was warm; the applause, as the evening went on, grew warmer and warmer; her reception at last was rapturous. It is not, however, because of this effect produced—because of bouquets and recalls—that we announce the success to have been complete. Such signs may be fallacious, but musical ears cannot be deceived as to musical proficiency,—and the new Amina proved herself to be not a raw scholar, but a real artist, and, as such, made at her outset that step which those for whom allowances must be claimed—albeit the claimants have still the courage to present themselves while they should be at school—too seldom make during a lifetime. Health and strength permitting, Miss Balfe has a brilliant career before her; in particular, we imagine, as a singer of Rossini's operas, since while, for the most part, they demand from the prima donna executive power, musical skill, and charm of tone, they do not call for the compass of a *soprano acuto*, nor the force of a walking trombone.

Dwight's Journal of Music.

BOSTON, JULY 4, 1857.

We send this number of our paper forth amid the ringing of bells, the thunder of big cannons, the petulant plague of petty fire-crackers, the blare of numberless brass bands, and all the confusing patriotic noises that make up a celebration of the nation's birth-day. Surely we are bound to be a musical people in due time, since all our ingenuity in public jubulations, in the art of general self-amusement exhausts itself year after year in this one form of a vast "Calathumpian" gunpowder Symphony! We take to noise, to *sounding* demonstrations, as a duck takes to water. Stunned with all this glory, with breast full of patriotism, and ears full of "Yankee Doodle" and of "Hail Columbia," what can we have to say, or what report of music as an Art? And verily it is a barren time with us, in respect of music. There may be much good silent planting going on, but there is little open fruit-bearing or reaping. Concerts and operas are scattering and comparatively insignificant.

In the latter field, however, there are still some signs of after-harvesting and gleanings.—Mme. LAGRANGE, we see, commenced this week a series of six more "farewells," in the shape of operatic performances at the New York Academy, with BRIGNOLI, AMODIO, &c., giving *I Puritani* on Monday, and *Norma* on Wednesday, to large and fashionable houses. Will not this admirable singer give us a chance to *encore* her

farewells here in Boston, too? In Philadelphia the German opera has closed with tempting prospects for another season; they even talk of *Nozze di Figaro*, of *Oberon*, of *Tannhäuser*, as well as of *Don Juan* and *Fidelio*!

But the note-worthiest event in Philadelphia, and in this country, for the fortnight past, has been the Annual German Festival, or *Saenger-Fest*. We could not be there to see and hear, even by vicarious eyes and ears; but deeming the event too interesting and too significant to be omitted in our chronicle of Art, we borrow an intelligent account of the proceedings from the New York *Musical Review*. We fully agree with the writer in the hope that this fine element of the Teutonic nationality will not keep itself too distinct, but will more and more blend with our Americanism, adapting its musical and social manifestations somewhat to our wants and comprehension, infusing its artistic, genial enthusiasm into our lives, and perhaps receiving equal blessings in return.

But fortunately for our own barrenness, what grand reports there come to us from England! The same week, kept by the Germans here, was there dedicate to HANDEL. Two thousand voices, five hundred instruments, with the presence and sympathy of audiences ranging from 11,000 upwards, (the number was expected to be much greater on the second day, when the Queen was present), were engaged on the 15th, 17th and 19th of June in doing homage to a musician and a man, than whom, as the London *Musical World* well says, "No one that ever breathed the air of England—Shakspeare perhaps excepted—has conferred greater benefits on her people." The same paper adds: "Who will venture to assert that the civilized world would not have been worse without the *Messiah*?" This colossal festival, so unprecedented in magnitude, is only experimental and preliminary to still greater things in prospect for the celebration of the anniversary of Handel's death, in 1859. So grand a demonstration was in keeping with the gigantic majesty of Handel's thoughts, and with the spirit of our age; and therefore all will rejoice to hear that so bold an experiment, in spite of all predictions of impracticability, or even of scientific doubts whether such a mass of sound, spread over so much space, could reach the ear at once, even if it all moved as one, proved in the main eminently successful. All the accounts agree in pronouncing it a great success. Some drawbacks, to be sure, are mentioned, such as imperfect hearing of the softer solo passages, and the more complicated choral movements, owing chiefly to the un-acoustic nature of the glass and iron Palace. As matter of history, we have wished to place as full as possible a record of the three days, and (what was in some respects even more interesting) of the last rehearsal, in our columns. We have read several vivid and intelligent reports, but select that of the *Times* upon the whole, as both the fullest and most careful, while it agrees in all essentials with the others. We give to-day reports of the two first days, leaving the third day to our next, when doubtless we shall also get fuller statistics as to numbers of audience, &c. That accounts should differ as to the effect of certain passages and voices, is natural, considering the different localities of hearers in so vast a building. There is some difference, too, of special criticism. One quotes: "When

you want an angel in singing, send for Clara Novello," and praises all she did, as do the most. Another brings this serious charge against England's pattern oratorio singer:

We should have been better pleased, however, had Madame Novello been content to sing the music as Handel wrote it. On the opening day of a great Handel Festival she should have exhibited better taste than to depart so completely from Handel's score. In the air: "I know that my Redeemer liveth," she never, in one single instance, gave the correct music to the words just quoted, but substituted in the latter half of the passage a barbarous innovation of her own.

The Handel Festival was not the only musical event that week in London. Clinging about it were of course many parasites, among which one huge one—Jullien's ten-days Festival at the Surrey Gardens, of which we spoke last week, with troops of famous singers; three oratorios, ("Creation," "Elijah" and the "Seasons,") a Mendelssohn night, a Verdi night, &c., &c., in his imperial, grand Panjandrum way. Then there were the two opera houses. The tenor of our last reports was still kept up—the usual repetitions of the *Trovatore* and the *Traviata*; but with one redeeming effort made in rivalry at both houses, namely, the revival of *Don Giovanni*; at the Royal Italian, with Mario and Grisi, and Mlle. Marai as Elvira, and Mme. Bosio, whose Zerlina charmed as it did here in Boston years ago, and Ronconi as the Don, and Herr Formes, Leporello. At Her Majesty's the thing was made more complete than ever before, with restoration of the usually omitted parts, and closer carrying out of all the scenic and dramatic intentions of the poem. Here our old friend, Beneventano, was the Don, who, (the *Times* says), "gives a very gallant representation of the part, makes love and declares war with a full conviction of ultimate victory, and eats his supper with an air of princely independence." The Piccolomini was a fascinating Zerlina. "Never did village coquette nudge, pout, pinch, elbow, sulk, wheedle, or fondle, with more earnestness, more charmingly, or more irresistibly." Mlle. Spezia, as Donna Anna, and Mlle. Ortolani as Elvira, are much praised, and so is Sig. Belletti, as Leporello; but Giuglini, as Ottavio, "did not shine." A good sign was it, that *Don Giovanni* was to be repeated three times during the Handel week.

Next week we hope to glance at music on the Continent. Meanwhile returning home again, to our own barrenness, we are reminded that something is indeed done, as we have before hinted, in the way of *planting*. Planting good seeds, we can but hope. There are more musical schools in operation, perhaps, in the summer than in the winter; at least large schools of native growth, where music, and the art of teaching music, are taught in large classes. We have already mentioned one good beginning in this city, in the "Boston Music School." To-day a friend, at our request, kindly furnishes us with an account of another, conducted in the pleasant village of North Reading, but a few miles back in the green country. Each has its peculiar advantages; that in the country, of cheaper living, retirement, influence of nature, &c.; that in the city, of closer contact with musicians, access to city oratorios and concerts, &c. The conduct of these two schools enlists a large variety of talent, and we wish them both success, in the sincere hope that a true Conservatory of Music may result from one or both of them.

Musical Correspondence.

NEW HAVEN, CONN., JULY 1.—I believe it is not often that you receive a letter from this place, which is, on the contrary, rather famed for its *unmusicality*, if I may be allowed to coin the word. During many former visits, I have found that it justly merited this unenviable celebrity; but of late, my experience has led me to hope that a brighter day is dawning for "Heavenly music," beneath the noble

elms of this fair city—so fair, indeed, that it is but meet that the Arts should have a home here, and flourish peacefully under the protection of its grand old guardians, East and West Rock, which, like two sleeping monster lions, keep faithful watch on either side of the gem entrusted to their care.

Here, as in so many other places, the first to awaken a sense of this necessity, have been Germans. Three of these, one a professor of drawing and painting, the other two of music, have settled in New Haven within the past few years, and are making the most praiseworthy efforts to cultivate the public taste, and arouse and develop slumbering talent. As a proof of the success which one, at least, of the musicians has met with, I must give you an account of a Soirée which Mr. WEHNER gave last week at a private house, and to only invited guests. The performers were the professor himself on the violin and piano, three of his pupils, (two gentlemen and a young lady), on the latter instrument, an amateur also on the violoncello, and the Quartet choir of Trinity Church. The programme was as follows:

1. Overture—Magic Flute.....Mozart
2. Quartet—Ave Verum.....Rossini
3. Elegie—Violin.....Ernst
4. Adagio—Piano, Violin and 'cello.....Haydn
5. Larghetto—2d Symphony.....Beethoven
6. Gloria in Excelsis—16th Mass.....Haydn
7. Overture—Fidelio.....Beethoven
8. Song without Words—Violin.....Mendelssohn
9. Trio—Attila.....Verdi
10. Trio—Paritani, Piano, Violin and 'cello.....Bellini
11. Overture—Oberon.....Weber
12. Quartet—O Gloria.....Lambillotte
13. Overture—Midsummer Night's Dream.....Mendelssohn

You will admit that this presents a very respectable array of names, with only a small sprinkling of the common-place in homage to variety of tastes. From the remarks made in my immediate neighborhood, however, I should hardly have supposed this precaution to be necessary. They betokened such appreciation and enthusiasm as to delight the heart of any true music-lover.

The piano performances were all very creditable, although the last two overtures seemed a trifle too difficult for some of the players. The Larghetto of Beethoven was exceedingly well rendered. In his violin solos, Mr. Wehner proved himself a master of his instrument and played with a truth of feeling which is not often found. The 'Cello-player was not so good, so that the Adagio of Haydn, otherwise extremely beautiful, was a little marred, as well as cut short by the omission of the 'cello variation.

The vocal quartet was composed of very fine voices, and gave ample evidence of careful practice and earnest feeling. Its members acquitted themselves admirably throughout, and gave general pleasure by their performances. Of these, I enjoyed most the *Gloria in Excelsis*, by Haydn; but it was the *O Gloria* of Lambillotte which was unanimously encored. It is a spirited, finely harmonized work.

This Soirée was only one of a weekly series which takes place during the winter, and if the others are as well attended and as attentively listened to as this one, I think we may be satisfied with the progress of Art in this place. Of the good which their originators are doing, several of Mr. Wehner's, as well as Mr. STOECKEL's pupils, whom I have met, give ample proof. One of the former is quite an instance of the triumph of genius. Mr. C. is quite a young man, and has been brought up to the trade of a tanner. As far as I know, he has had no early musical instruction whatever, but has only of late years taken up the study of the *Divine Art* from pure love of it. By devoting every leisure moment to perfecting himself therein, he has acquired a remarkable degree of proficiency, and a refined taste, and continues assiduously to improve himself, without, however, neglecting in the least his daily avocation.

Another pupil of the same master, a young lady, has the reputation of practising fourteen hours a day, but I fear that this is more a sign of indomitable perseverance than of true love for music, which must be lost entirely in the mechanical drudgery which she imposes on herself. Why will not people understand that one hour's practice with the *mind* is better than three of mere finger gymnastics!

I see by the papers that the Mendelssohn Union have performed the "Creation" in New York, and regret very much being obliged to miss it. I should much prefer it if their fourth concert did not come so late in the season. It was so late last year, too; when they gave "Athalia" and the "Walpurgis Night," at just about this time, when also I was out of town.

A Day at North Reading, Mass.

[From a Correspondent.]

Taking one of the early trains which leave the depot of the Boston and Maine Railroad Company, we found ourselves, after a short and agreeable ride through flourishing towns and pleasant villages, at the station, Reading. Already the negro boy, Douglas, was awaiting our arrival, to convey us to our destination, which lies about four miles north of this point. It was one of those lovely mornings of June, of which the poets sing; the fields and meadows were clothed in their most luxuriant garments, the air was harmonious with the warbling of birds, while the fresh, exhilarating atmosphere imparted, as it were, new life and vigor to all around. After a drive of some half an hour through this delightful open country, we discovered just upon the brow of an approaching hill a well-proportioned building of somewhat ancient pretensions, upon the face of which we espied in large letters, the words: "NORMAL MUSICAL INSTITUTE." A few moments brought us to its threshold. Alighting from our vehicle, we were greeted by the welcome faces of Dr. LOWELL MASON and Mr. GEO. F. ROOT. The ground in front of the building was occupied by groups of students, enjoying themselves with various kinds of manly exercises, previous to repairing to the appointments of the day.

The Institute has already been in existence for some years, and originally held its sessions in New York; but latterly North Reading has been chosen as the scene of its labors, probably from the fact that in a quiet and retired spot like this, there is found less to distract one's attention from study, and as also affording better opportunities for those engaged in a particular pursuit to come oftener in contact, an important desideratum to those striving for the accomplishment of the same end. The object of the directors is to furnish means for the instruction and improvement of those persons of both sexes, who already are, or who intend to be, engaged in the work of teaching music, training choirs or classes, or conducting the music of the sanctuary. Opportunity is afforded to those who desire it, to receive private tuition in singing, piano-forte or violin playing—thus enabling them to become qualified for any position they may be called upon to occupy. So widely has the reputation of the Institute extended, that one finds here representatives from nearly every State in the Union, who wend their way hither for the purpose of availing themselves of the advantages offered. The session for this year has but fairly commenced, and already nearly seventy-five persons are enjoying its benefits. In addition to Dr. Mason and Mr. Root, the following persons are engaged as instructors in the various departments: Mr. Geo. J. WEBB as associate in the conduct of the Institute; Mr. AUGUST KREISSMANN as private vocal instructor; Mr. NATHAN B. CLAPP as instructor on the piano-forte; Mr. T. I. COOK, of New York, as instructor on the violin; and Messrs. LOOMIS and PERKINS, of the same city, as assistant teachers in different departments of vocal instruction. The daily routine is much after the following manner:

From 8.30 to 9.15—Elementary class in Vocal Training, with particular attention to all that is essential to a correct vocal performance.

From 9.15 to 11.15—Familiar lecture on elementary music, and methods of teaching, including an examination of the true mission of song; its relations to man's creative nature; and the furnishing of teachers with a knowledge of those principles which, having their foundation in nature, shall serve as a sure guide to their future work.

From 11.15 to 12—Advanced class in Vocal Training, Practice of Solfeggi, style and facility in execution.

From 2.30 to 3.15—Elementary class in Harmony, Formation of chords with their proper progressions.

From 3.15 to 3.45—Teaching exercise, during which time some member of the class assumes the position of teacher, subject to the criticism of the other members. Time is occasionally taken for musical performances by individuals, also subject to the criticisms of the class and teachers.

From 3.45 to 4.20—Advanced class in Harmony, composition and four-part writing. On particular days certain of the above exercises are laid aside for the practice of glees and chorus singing, under the direction of Mr. Webb, whose long experience and excellent qualifications in this department are too well known to need comment. Altogether, the whole plan of arrangement appears to be admirably adapted for the accomplishment of the purposes desired. We could but help noticing the unusual enthusiasm manifested by the students generally, and the great

desire upon their part for the acquirement of knowledge, for the love of it.

The glee and choral performances were quite remarkable, for so large a number brought promiscuously together, and also when we consider that many had taken them up *a prima vista*.

The shades of evening were already gathering fast, as re-seating ourselves in the conveyance of the morning, we commenced our little journey towards the city. Gradually the majestic tones of one of Handel's sublime choruses grew fainter and fainter, until lost in the distance, and while musing over the pleasures which our excursion had afforded us, we became more than ever convinced that if our country shall ever be able to boast of institutions conducted after the plan, and with the same high standard, as the Conservatories, which are the pride of the musical cities of the old world, they must have their origin in such gatherings as that which we have witnessed to-day. Success to those who lend their time and influence to the undertaking!

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